

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

UN summit fakery shows workers must defend land and labor
— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 85/NO. 43 NOVEMBER 22, 2021

Join SWP to expand reach of 'Militant,' books, fund

BY SETH GALINSKY

The *Militant* and books by Socialist Workers Party leaders and other revolutionaries are getting around among working people. Strikers on picket lines say they appreciate the paper's accurate coverage of their struggles and the news it brings them of other labor battles. Readers of the paper have introduced the party to neighbors and friends they think would be interested. Workers behind bars show the paper to fellow prisoners and encourage them to subscribe. Many are also getting books and making contributions to the SWP Party-Building Fund.

With two weeks left in the international drive, members of the communist movement are organizing to surpass the goals of 1,300 subscriptions and an equal number of books, and to collect \$130,000 for the Party-Building Fund. (See chart on page 3).

"We're starting to see the pendulum swing toward more union strength,"

Continued on page 3

Deere strikers: End divisive two-tier, raise all our wages

BY EDWIN FRUIT

WATERLOO, Iowa — United Auto Workers members on strike at John Deere plants in Iowa, Illinois and Kansas, and distribution centers in Denver and Atlanta, rejected the bosses' second contract proposal Nov. 2.

While it contained a higher wage

**KELLOGG'S WORKERS:
EQUAL WORK, EQUAL PAY**
— see article page 6

offer and some other concessions, the bosses made no movement on what workers consider a key issue — divisive two tiers in wages and benefits. The majority of workers felt they could win more by continuing the strike.

This *Militant* worker-correspondent went along with Mark Severs, a member of Teamsters Local 638 in Minneapolis, and met with Kirk Drape, one of the vice presidents of UAW Local 838 here. Teamsters Locals 638 and 471 sent re-

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Solidarity with striking miners at Warrior Met!

Join fight against court ban on right to picket



Militant/Ruth Robinett

Miners and supporters march in New York Nov. 4 to back seven-month strike at Warrior Met Coal in Brookwood, Alabama, protest court ban on all picketing within 300 yards of mines.

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — Led by a contingent of miners from the more than seven-month-long strike at Warrior Met Coal in Brookwood, Alabama, over 400 people marched here Nov. 4 to support the strikers and to protest an Oct. 27 court injunction that bans picketing or other union activity of any kind within 300 yards of the mines.

"In Alabama we've got an injunction that says we can't picket," United Mine Workers of America President Cecil Roberts told the marchers. "We've got an injunction that says we can't talk. We've got an injunction that says we can't gather up."

Defense attorneys knock out all but one Black juror in Arbery killing trial

BY SAM MANUEL

ATLANTA — Family members of Ahmaud Arbery and their supporters expressed anger at the way jury selection turned out in the trial of three vigilantes who killed the Black youth. All but one of the 12-member jury and three alternates are Caucasian, even though a quarter of the residents in Glynn County, where the trial is being held, are Black.

Twenty-five-year-old Arbery was chased and gunned down in February 2020 while jogging in a Brunswick, Georgia, neighborhood by Travis McMichael and his father Gregory. They were joined in the fatal assault by William Bryan, a neighbor who captured the killing on his cellphone.

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"I live in America and somewhere I've heard about the freedom of speech. I've heard something about the freedom of assembly, and, as Dr. King said, part of the greatness of America is the right to protest for rights. That's what we're doing now"

Continued on page 2

Some NY taxi drivers win debt reduction, fight for all continues

BY TAMAR ROSENFELD

Fifteen days after some two dozen New York City yellow-cab drivers began a well-publicized hunger strike, New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer and Taxi and Limousine Commissioner Aloysee Heredia Jarmoszuk announced Nov. 3 an agreement had been reached between the city, the New York Taxi

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What do the 2021 election results mean for the US working class?



Militant/Mary Martin

Doug Nelson, SWP candidate for Minneapolis mayor, right, at rally against U.S. Cuba embargo July 15. SWP candidates built support for union fights, offered road forward for working class.

BY TERRY EVANS

The 2021 elections registered a sharp rejection of the anti-working-class politics of the liberal and middle-class socialist wing of the Democratic Party by workers and farmers across the country. From "defund the cops" referendums in Minneapolis and Seattle to the election results nationwide, candidates reflecting these views went down to defeat, taking other Democrats with them.

These results showed a deep opposition among millions of working people toward policies aimed at imposing controls over the way we think, talk and behave.

This was captured in a sharp warning to Democratic Party leaders issued by James Carville, a long-time party operative. "What went wrong is just stupid wokeness," he said on PBS NewsHour. "Don't just look at Vir-

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Sudan protests continue, fight to overturn military coup 4

Guantánamo trial exposes brutality of CIA torture 7

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Over 22,000 Canadian public workers strike for higher pay

Santa Fe bakery workers strike Jon Donaire over pay, conditions

Solidarity with striking miners

Continued from front page and that’s what we’ll do when we get back to Alabama.”

The union is organizing solidarity actions against the injunction across the country. Plans will be posted on the UMWA Facebook page.

A solidarity action was organized the same day by International Longshoremen’s Association Local 1410 in Mobile, Alabama.

The injunction, which was extended through at least Nov. 15 by the court, is one of the most draconian anti-strike measures taken in decades. The fight to overturn it is in the interests of all working people.

The miners are “not asking for something outrageous,” Roberts said. “They’re not wanting to be millionaires or anything like that. They’re basically wanting to get back to where they were five years ago.”

“I’m on strike for my family and for my brothers and sisters in the mines,” Warrior Met striker Brian Kelly, a third generation coal miner and president of UMWA Local 2245, told the press at the rally. “We lost \$6 an hour in 2016.”

Busloads of retired miners and some who are working came from Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio and Alabama. A contingent of a few dozen hotel workers from UNITE HERE Local 100 joined the action, as did the Coalition of Labor Union Women and other New York area unionists. They marched from Central Park to the offices of BlackRock, one of the country’s largest hedge funds, that holds \$167 million of Warrior Met stock. That 14% stake makes BlackRock the largest shareholder.

“I came because we need to defend the union,” 94-year-old Roy Castle told the *Militant*. Castle came with dozens of others from southwest Virginia. Pointing to his pension and lifetime health care won by the union, he added, “We survived because we have the union.”

Some 1,100 UMWA members went on strike at Warrior Met after the company refused to reverse concessions made in 2016 when the previous owner, Jim Walter Resources, went bankrupt. BlackRock was Jim Walter’s largest creditor and played a key role in setting up the new company. Miners say that bosses promised they would restore wages and benefits once the company was running again.

Warrior Met profits soar

Warrior Met says that they have done so much hiring that 60% of the strikers weren’t even working there in 2016, as if that would be justification for maintaining the givebacks.

Two days before the protest, Warrior Met CEO Walter Scheller announced “our most profitable results since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.” The price of coal has more than doubled since the end of 2020.

Warrior Met did not respond to questions sent by the *Militant*.

Hoping to undercut the broad solidarity the strike is receiving, the company has been violence-baiting the union, alleging that strikers have been physically attacking the vehicles of scabs crossing the picket line.

“They put out videos on us that said we were being violent,” UMWA District 20 Vice President Larry Spencer told the rally. “They don’t put the part



UMWA International Longshoremen’s Association Local 1410 protest Nov. 4 at Mobile, Alabama, port where Warrior Met bosses ship coal abroad. Action supported New York UMWA rally.

out where their cars have been hitting our people.”

Cops protect scabs

The union has complained to the police about the attacks on pickets by scabs, to no avail. Instead, the cops are escorting the scabs into the mine.

“They’re trying to break the union,” Brian Sanson, UMWA secretary-treasurer, told the rally. “We have a right to picket.” The union is appealing the unconstitutional injunction to the Alabama Supreme Court.

Retired miner Chris Lester, 64, told the *Militant* the injunction “means only the scabs have rights.”

Lester, like many of the retirees at the march, was part of the 11-month strike against Pittston Coal Company in Virginia in 1989. Thousands of miners and other workers came to the strikers’ Camp Solidarity to join in their struggle. “I was arrested for being part of stopping the coal trucks,” Lester said. “That strike was some experience.”

Tevita Uhatafe, a fleet service clerk at American Airlines at the Dallas-Fort Worth airport and shop steward for Transport Workers Union Local 513, got union time off from work to attend the rally. “I’ve been going to every strike I can get to,” she said. “We have to keep pushing.”

“We had a community and union protest at the harbor in Mobile at the same

time as the UMWA protest in New York,” Mark Bass, president of International Longshoremen’s Association Local 1410, told the *Militant* Nov. 9.

“The ILA is standing 100% behind the striking miners,” he said. Warrior Met, which produces metallurgical coal used in steelmaking, ships its coal out of the port of Mobile to Latin America, Asia and Europe.

“We’ve talked to the Port Authority in Mobile and explained that we don’t want Warrior Met’s business here as long as the miners are on strike,” Bass said. “We have connections with dockworkers all over the world and are in touch with them about this.”

Bass had helped organize some 60 ILA members and leaders from Charleston, South Carolina; Jacksonville, Florida; and Mobile to attend the UMWA solidarity rally in Brookwood, Alabama, Aug. 4.

Spread the word about the strike! Send donations to UMWA 2021 Strike Fund at P.O. Box 513, Dumfries, VA 22026. Send messages of support to District 20, 21922 Hwy. 216 (Miners’ Memorial Parkway), McCalla, AL 35111, Email umwadistrict20@bellsouth.net.

Strike support rallies are held every Wednesday at 6 p.m. at Tannehill State Park in McCalla.

Susan LaMont contributed to this article.

THE MILITANT

Emulate Revolutionary Cuba’s vaccination drive

U.S. government mandates to force working people to get vaccinated are the class opposite of high rate of voluntary inoculations in Cuba. The ‘Militant’ explains how Cuba’s socialist revolution is based on the conscious mobilization of working people to defend their class interests.

Radio Grito de Baire Cuban students, medical volunteers, do millions of home visits. Above, in Ciego de Ávila.

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Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

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‘Militant,’ books, fund drive

Continued from front page
retired union carpenter Bill Dearing told Socialist Workers Party members Naomi Craine and Amy Husk when they joined the picket line in support of the Bakery Workers Union strike at the Kellogg’s plant in Battle Creek, Michigan, Nov. 4. “It’s important to show solidarity,” he said. “If people see others walking the line with the strikers, maybe they will step up and give more support.”

Dearing and several strikers were outraged when the SWP campaigners told them a judge had banned United Mine Workers strikers from picketing or even being within 300 yards of the entrances to Warrior Met Coal mines in Brookwood, Alabama. “That’s unconstitutional!” Dearing said.

Workers need our own party

The government represents the bosses. That’s why working people need to organize independently of it, Craine said. “We need to build a labor party, based on a fighting union movement, and break with both the Democratic and Republican parties.”

Dearing said he thinks Democrats are better than Republicans. But he liked what the SWP campaigners said about why workers need to rely on ourselves and our unions to fight bosses’ attacks. He and five strikers on the picket line subscribed to the *Militant*.

Craine and Husk met a couple of strikers who have been reading the paper since early in the bakery workers strike. One got a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, one of several books on special for the drive (see ad on page 6).

“I support [the strikers],” Wendi

Taylor said when Craine and Husk knocked on her door in Battle Creek later in the day, part of building solidarity for the strike. “My dad worked for Kellogg’s. When they started going up to them when they’re about to punch out, and saying you have to stay another eight hours, that’s when he retired.”

Across the street an electrical worker subscribed. The members of his union local have refused to cross the picket line to do work in the plant.

Winning contributions to fund

SWP members Willie Cotton and Róger Calero met with Luisa Ortiz, a retired health care worker, member of Service Employees International Union Local 1199 and longtime reader of the *Militant*, in Brooklyn Nov. 7. They discussed everything from the need to build support for the growing number of strikes today, to what working people in Cuba are doing to defend their socialist revolution. Ortiz renewed her subscription and contributed \$10 to the Party-Building Fund.

Then she took the SWP campaigners on a brief tour of her neighborhood, introducing them to small-store owners and workers. At a coffee shop one worker used his tip money to subscribe.

Getting back to workers who are already reading the paper is important for expanding the party’s reach. In addition, when they learn the *Militant* and the Socialist Workers Party are funded entirely by working people many want to contribute to the fund.

SWP members Candace Wagner and Tony Lane talked to a number of workers knocking on doors in Fairmont, West Virginia, Nov. 9. Workers in the town have been hard hit by the closure of the Mylan Pharmaceuticals plant in nearby Morgantown where over 1,500 were laid off earlier this year, including 850 members of the United Steelworkers union.

Vaccine mandates?

Becky Friend worked there for 13 years. She opposes forcing workers to get vaccines by government mandate. “Look at these nurses, they put their lives on the line during the pandemic. Now you are going to fire them for not getting the vaccine!” she said.

Lane described the response of the Cuban government to the pandemic. Some 90% of the population has had at least one shot, without government-enforced mandates, far higher than the percentage in the U.S. where the government has imposed them.

“Health care is a high priority and the Cuban people trust their government,” Lane said. Working people made a socialist revolution there in 1959, bringing to power a government of workers and farmers. Friend subscribed to the *Militant* and



Militant/Rachele Fruit
SWP campaigner Chuck Guerra, right, talks with David Marquez, a welder in Miami, Nov. 8. Marquez, who immigrated from Venezuela, bought *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?*

bought *Teamster Rebellion* and *In Defense of the US Working Class*.

“They’ve killed coal,” Jerry Harris, a retired member of the Steelworkers union, told the SWP campaigners. He said government regulations accelerated the closing of mines.

“The interests of the U.S. working class lie on the side of the 25% of humanity with no electricity, not stopping the use of fossil fuels with no replacement,” Lane said. “All forms of energy production are unsafe unless workers and our unions fight to take control of production out of the bosses’ hands.”

“Health care is more expensive here than in Cleveland where my daughter lives,” Harris said. “There should be one national price, not area by area. When you reach 65 health care should be free.”

“Health care is a big business,” Wagner pointed out. That will only change when workers and working farmers join together to take power out of the hands of the capitalist class like they did in Cuba.

“You know where the word ‘redneck’ comes from?” Kevin McLe, a union electrician, told Wagner. “The coal miners wore red bandanas to identify each other in the armed battle of Blair Mountain against the mine bosses.” He was referring to the thousands of miners who battled the police and strikebreakers in West Virginia, in 1921.

“We have to learn our history,” McLe said. “Some of my co-workers think that West Virginia fought with the South in the Civil War! We separated from Virginia to not secede from the Union with the slave owners.”

McLe subscribed to the *Militant* and bought the book *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism* by Barnes. It takes apart the self-serving rationalizations by a layer of the middle class that think their school-

ing equips them to regulate the lives of working people. It also includes descriptions of working-class battles in previous decades, part of the hidden history McLe was referring to.

“Wages are low and costs keep going up,” welder David Marquez, an immigrant from Venezuela, told Chuck Guerra and Rachele Fruit in northwest Miami Nov. 8. “I realize this country is for the Americans, but conditions for us are very bad.”

“There is not one category of ‘Americans,’” Fruit said. “The United States, like the rest of the capitalist world, is class divided. It is organized for the benefit of the wealthy. The working class has everything in common with workers all over the world. Our class is using our unions and fighting to defend ourselves in a way we haven’t seen in decades.”

Marquez got a copy of the *Militant* and *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?*

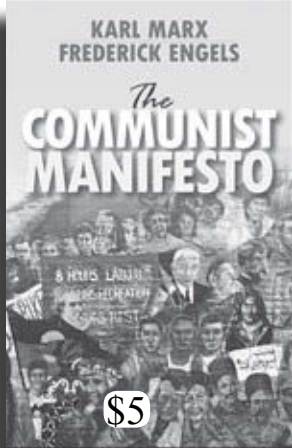
The day before, Fruit and Steve Warshell were in Lake Worth, Florida, an area where sugar cane, vegetables and fruit are grown. Tens of thousands of farmworkers live in nearby towns.

Several workers Fruit and Warshell met were interested in the *Militant*’s unique coverage of strike battles workers are organizing today. They sold three copies of *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?*, one each in English, Spanish and French. A roofer and a landscaper subscribed to the *Militant*.

Help the international drives and the Party-Building Fund go over the top! To find the branch of the party nearest you see the directory on page 8. You can send a check or money order with your contribution directly to the Socialist Workers Party, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Earmark it for the Party-Building Fund.

Campaign to expand reach of
‘Militant,’ books, SWP fund
October 2 - November 23 (week five)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Fund received
UNITED STATES						
Albany*	80	43	90	57	\$8,200	\$1,877
Atlanta	80	50	80	55	\$11,200	\$6,552
Chicago*	115	104	100	61	\$13,500	\$10,153
Cincinnati	60	24	60	21	\$5,000	\$2,753
Dallas*	45	35	40	27	\$3,100	\$1,476
Lincoln	12	10	12	12	\$350	\$307
Los Angeles	85	69	85	77	\$13,700	\$3,509
Miami	30	24	30	18	\$4,200	\$2,175
Minneapolis*	55	45	60	51	\$5,000	\$3,798
N. New Jersey	75	61	75	58	\$6,600	\$3,687
New York	105	85	105	101	\$16,300	\$8,660
Oakland	85	67	85	79	\$13,100	\$9,912
Philadelphia	30	27	30	22	\$4,000	\$1,700
Pittsburgh*	50	42	50	39	\$4,700	\$2,469
Seattle	65	41	65	36	\$12,000	\$6,124
Washington	50	38	50	37	\$5,800	\$2,816
Other						\$5,063
Total U.S.	1022	765	1017	751	\$126,750	\$73,031
Prisoners	25	34				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	40	36	40	41		
Manchester	40	36	40	32		
Total U.K.	80	72	80	73		
Canada	90	64	90	67		
New Zealand	25	12	25	15		
Australia	25	13	25	14		
Total	1,267	960	1,237	920	\$126,750	\$73,031
SHOULD BE	1,300	923	1,300	923	\$130,000	\$92,300
*Raised goal						



The Communist Manifesto

“Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of the workers.”

— Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

Written in 1848, the *Communist Manifesto* explains why communism is the line of march of the working class toward power, “springing from an existing class struggle, a historical movement going on under our very eyes.”

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What 2021 elections reveal

Continued from front page

ginia and New Jersey. Look at Long Island, look at Buffalo, look at Minneapolis, even look at Seattle.

“I mean, this ‘defend the police’ lunacy, this take Abraham Lincoln’s name off of schools.

“They’re expressing a language that people just don’t use, and there’s backlash and a frustration at that.”

From increasing use of government “mandates” imposed by liberals who are convinced workers are too stupid to know what is good for them, to school board officials imposing “critical race theory,” including on math classes, many working people expressed their anger in the distorted arena of capitalist elections.

Another reflection of working people’s rejection of Democrats who describe our class as “deplorables” is growing interest in the campaigns and activities of the Socialist Workers Party. Joanne Kuniansky, the party’s candidate for governor in New Jersey, was credited with over 3,800 votes so far.

‘Defund police’ referendum defeated

A ballot initiative in Minneapolis to defund the cops was sponsored by self-described “abolitionists,” who sought to replace the police with a “Department of Public Safety” composed largely of social workers with a “comprehensive public health approach to crime.” A few cops would be kept to use only “if necessary.” It was soundly rejected.

“Because workers have to deal with the consequences of the real world and its contradictions on a daily basis, they can’t afford to act as if they live in a ‘woke’ fantasy,” Doug Nelson, the SWP-backed candidate for mayor there, explained to workers for months. “Crime is defined by the capitalist rulers to maintain their power and privileges. Their laws and the way they’re enforced are designed to keep workers in line and to brand substantial layers of us as criminals, particularly those who are Black or from other oppressed nationalities.”

This reality was driven home to many in 2020, when Minneapolis cops killed George Floyd, followed by national demonstrations that erupted in cities large and small across the country against police brutality.

“What is of great concern to workers, however, is anti-social violence within working-class communities. In addition to the immediate consequences for those affected, it saps workers’ confidence and tears at social solidarity,” Nelson said. “The rulers’ cops and courts are aimed against us, but it is far better to live under their rule of law than without it, where warlords, gangs and vigilantes fill the gap.

“Since the police exist to protect the profit-driven system that breeds crime, there is no ‘policing policy’ solution,” he explained. “Communists are for dis-

mantling the capitalist police, but only when the workers have taken political power and forged experienced class-conscious combatants to replace them.”

In liberal Seattle, “abolitionist” candidates for both mayor and city attorney were defeated.

Democrats lose in Virginia

The defeat of former Democratic Party Gov. Terry McAuliffe in Virginia at the hands of a virtually unknown opponent, Glenn Youngkin, was a shock to liberal pundits.

McAuliffe’s defeat came after he rebuked parents for “telling schools what they should teach.” This followed debate about liberal school boards’ moves to incorporate “critical race theory” into curriculum at every level, which claims Caucasian people are innately racist. This “theory” places the blame on working people for the racist oppression that is fomented and used by the capitalist rulers to perpetuate their hold on power.

McAuliffe’s attack on parents followed the arrest of Scott Smith at a June 22 Loudoun County School Board meeting. Smith had berated officials, saying they did nothing when his daughter was raped by a boy who identified as a girl in the school’s girls restroom. Loudoun County permits students to use bathrooms they say match their gender identity, a policy initiated federally by the Barack Obama White House. It is part of a broader assault on women’s rights.

Following Smith’s arrest, the Joseph Biden administration worked with the National School Boards Association to put out a letter alleging board members now face rising threats of “domestic terrorism.” It cited Smith’s angry remarks as an example. Attorney General Merrick Garland has now unleashed the FBI to hunt down perpetrators of this “threat.”

During the week before the election former President Obama campaigned for McAuliffe, repeating the Democratic candidate’s defense of school boards and condemning parents’ complaints as “fake outrage.” On Oct. 25 a family court judge found the boy accused of the restroom rape of Smith’s daughter guilty.

Days later McAuliffe was voted out.

In New Jersey, incumbent liberal Democrat Philip Murphy only hung on to office by a thin margin, and Steven Sweeney, the long-time Democratic president of the state Senate, was ousted by first-time candidate Republican Edward Durr. Liberals made fun of the winner, a truck driver whose entire campaign budget was less than \$10,000. They couldn’t believe a worker could run and win.

But his cellphone recorded ads that resonated with working people whose family members and neighbors had born the brunt of the Democrats’ policies. In one he says he was running because “Murphy forced nursing homes to take in COVID-19 patients, resulting in the deaths of over 8,000 of our seniors” during the pandemic.

Such policies are rooted in the rulers’ contempt for working people. They fear that more of us are coming to recognize that the bosses and their parties have no “solution” to the capitalist crisis other than offloading it onto our backs.

Other races across the country underscored these trends. In Buffalo, New York, incumbent Mayor Byron Brown lost this summer’s Democratic primary

Sudan protests continue, fight to overturn military coup



Anadolu Agency/Mahmoud Hjj

Sudanese security forces fired rubber bullets and arrested scores of protesters in attacks against rallies in several cities Nov. 7, part of an ongoing wave of actions against the Oct. 25 military coup led by Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan. Thousands had rallied in the capital, Khartoum, and its twin city of Omdurman, as well as in Wad Madani to the south and in the northern city of Atbara.

In several cities, protesters attempted to build street barricades in response to calls for civil disobedience by the Sudanese Professionals Association.

Police fired tear gas at teachers who “were simply standing on the streets and carrying banners,” Mohamed al-Amin, a geography teacher, told Agence France-Presse. Around the country a number of trade union leaders were detained. All media not controlled by the military was shut down.

At least 14 demonstrators have been killed and some 300 wounded in the crackdown on protests, like that shown above in Khartoum Oct. 30. Dozens of members of the two-year-old ruling council tasked with leading a transition to civilian rule have been detained. Ousted Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok remains under house arrest.

“The Sudanese people have rejected the military coup,” Sudanese Professionals Association leaders said. They have vowed “no negotiation, no partnership, no legitimacy” with the military chiefs, rejecting army control over both the government and the economy. The association is resisting calls from Washington and Arab League governments to return to a coalition “transitional” government with the same army generals who seized power.

— ROY LANDERSEN

to India Walton, who is endorsed by the socialist wing of the Democrats. Brown tried to ignore her campaign and refused to debate her. Then Brown ran a serious write-in campaign against Walton in the general election and won, even though his name wasn’t on the ballot.

Liberal commentators responded to Democrats’ defeats by denigrating working people. Voters are “surly,” grumbled the editors of the *New York Times*. Columnist Charles Blow opined that Youngkin won because he unleashed the “white racial anxiety” so ingrained in working people.

Democratic socialist Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez doubled down on the anti-working-class course of her wing of the party. Angered by Carville’s criticism, she argued that McAuliffe lost in Virginia not because his positions clashed with those of working people, but because he wasn’t radical enough.

She claimed the only people who use the word “woke” are “older people,” like “Carville and Fox News pundits.”

Liberals drive to assure their rule

New York Democrats used their majorities in both the state Senate and House to put three referenda items on the ballot in the name of extending “voting rights.” In fact, their goal was nothing but to make it easier for Democrats to maintain their rule.

The measures, some of which had been put into effect by executive order by former Gov. Andrew Cuomo during the pandemic, were put forward as amendments to the state Constitution. This makes it harder to undo them in the future. The first was a redistricting measure. It would change the law to allow the state government to carry out redistrict-

ing with a 60% vote, as opposed to 66% in the law now. This naked power grab would mean the Democrats’ majority would allow it to gerrymander districts whenever they thought it advantageous.

The other two measures — to make absentee ballots available to everyone, absent or not, and to allow voter registration through the day of the election — have everything to do with trying to maintain Democratic Party control.

Voting rights were won in the 1960s through a mass Black-led movement that overthrew Jim Crow segregation. Poll taxes, slanted “literacy tests” and other measures used to deny Blacks the right to vote were outlawed. The measures promoted by Democrats in New York had nothing to do with this.

All three measures were voted down.

The most serious attacks on voting rights in New York have come from the Democrats. In 2020, they used their majorities in Albany to lower signature requirements for the “major” bosses parties to get on the ballot while *tripling* the requirement for parties like the Socialist Workers Party.

They attack the Republicans, and try to undercut them, but their real fear is the working class breaking from the rulers’ two-party shell game and entering politics in its own name, with its own party, a labor party, to contest for power. SWP candidates found broader interest in this course in this year’s election.

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. Send a check or money order payable to the ‘Militant’ and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Or donate at www.themilitant.com

NEW YORK
Rally in solidarity
with Cuba
Mon. Nov. 15, 2 p.m.
Stop US economic war
against Cuba!
For US-Cuba normalization
Gather 1:30 p.m. at
Cuban Mission to U.N.,
315 Lexington Ave.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Santa Fe bakery workers strike Jon Donaire over pay, conditions

SANTE FE SPRINGS, Calif. — Members of Local 37 of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union at Jon Donaire went on strike here Nov. 3. Their chant is “Raise, respect and pension!”

They make products under the Jon Donaire Dessert brand for the Rich Products-owned bakery in Los Angeles County. The plant employs about 180 to 200 workers, a majority women. Some 30 workers did not join the strike.

“We worked all the way through the pandemic because we like our jobs and we are here to do a good job. We make ice cream cakes that are sold worldwide. We want a dollar raise,” shop steward Julissa Marquez says on the union website.

Workers on the picket line told this reporter that they are not told about overtime until the end of their shift, making it especially hard for women because of child care responsibilities. Another problem is injuries caused by repetitive work and fast line speed.

The unionists maintain their picket line 24 hours a day and welcome other workers to visit and support them.

—Fredy Huinil

Ironworkers strike Erie Strayer over wages, attendance policy

ERIE, Pa. — Forty-two members of Ironworkers Regional Shop Local 851 have been on strike at Erie Strayer here for over a month. After six months of negotiations went nowhere, workers walked off the job Oct. 4, rejecting the company’s offer of 5-cent to 15-cent an hour raises over five years.

“That 5 cents offer is just like getting sand kicked in your face at the beach!” Tom Burdick, with 12 years in the plant, told the *Militant* on the picket line Nov. 5. It wouldn’t even come close to covering the rising prices today.

The union members are demanding a three-year contract, with raises of 60 cents the first year, retroactive to when the last contract ran out April 1, and 50

cents each of the next two years; a \$600 signing bonus; and, for the first time, a dental plan. Tracy Cutright, vice president and business representative for the local, said, “The company came back and said, ‘You’ve never had a dental plan, and you’re never going to get one.’”

The average wage in the plant is \$19 an hour, even though the work is highly skilled. Workers make mobile concrete batch production plants used on large construction sites. Workers have no pension, only a 401(k) stock plan.

“I don’t like being on strike,” Burdick said. “The first two weeks were very tough. Then we started receiving strike benefits from the international union, and help came in from other unions and the community. That’s when we realized we could put up a decent fight.”

Among the biggest supporters of the strike is United Electrical Workers Local 506 at the Wabtec locomotive plant in Erie, who were forced out in a bitter battle in 2019. They mobilized for a rally at the Erie Strayer plant gate Oct. 15 and UE members join the picket line regularly. Two Local 506 members came by while we were there.

Teamster drivers have refused to cross the picket line and have supported the strike, Cutright said, as well as

Over 22,000 Canadian public workers strike for higher pay

BY PHILIPPE TESSIER

FREDERICTON, New Brunswick — Over 22,000 members of 10 locals of the Canadian Union of Public Employees have been on strike across the province since Oct. 29. They are demanding higher wages to reduce the gap with public sector workers in the rest of Canada and no concessions on the pensions of two of the CUPE locals.

“Some 20 years of Liberal and Conservative governments have put us in this position, and it is time to say enough. We have been giving on wage and losing because of inflation and now it is time to stand up,” Rob Burke, a school custodian and member of CUPE Local 5017 in Saint John, told the *Militant*.



Militant/Fredy Huinil

Members of Bakery Workers union Local 37 on strike against Jon Donaire Desserts in Santa Fe Springs, California, picket plant Nov. 7 in fight for \$1 raise, respect and pensions.

teachers, firefighters and others.

Some probationary workers are still on the job, but Joshua Simpson decided to throw his lot in with the strikers. “Even while you’re working, there’s no guarantee to get off probation after 90 days. They use the attendance policy and arbitrary discipline to get rid of workers.”

This attendance policy is another key issue in the strike. Beyond getting disciplinary “points” for every absence,

workers are required to call in every day for when they will be out of work, whether they have COVID, are on three-day bereavement, or are in the hospital. Failure to call means an “absence without leave,” and even more points.

The union is planning a rally and march near the plant Nov. 18 to build support for their demands. To follow the strike, visit eriestrayerstrike.com. Join the picketing at 1851 Rudolph Ave.

—Candace Wagner

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



November 25, 1996

Class-conscious fighters around the world should loudly protest the imminent imperialist intervention in Central Africa. Using the pretext of a “humanitarian mission” to save refugees and the fig leaf of the United Nations, Paris, at first, and now Washington and Ottawa are pushing to send thousands of troops into eastern Zaire and the surrounding region.

The truth is that the crisis affecting over one million refugees there is a direct result of the policies of Washington and Paris. It is these, which through UN intervention in the early 1960s, crushed the anti-imperialist movement led by elected Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba and put in place the present dictatorship.

Intervention will only deepen the suffering of the toilers. The way forward lies in the struggle of the workers and farmers of the region to rid themselves of imperialist domination.



November 26, 1971

Hundreds of thousands of Chileans turned out to welcome Cuban Premier Fidel Castro when he arrived in Santiago Nov. 10. The trip is Castro’s first to Latin America in over 11 years.

Castro’s trip is taking place at a time when Washington is making increasingly menacing noises about Chile’s nationalization of U. S.-owned copper companies. The first indication that the U.S. was exerting pressure on Chile came last Aug. 11 when the Export-Import Bank rejected a Chilean request for a loan and loan guarantee for the purchase of three Boeing jets.

The mounting economic pressure is also reflected in the fact that during the past year private foreign companies have virtually ended any investment in Chile. The Sept. 28 announcement of Chile’s decision not to pay compensation to Kennecott and Anaconda set off the loudest saber rattling in Washington.



November 23, 1946

The differences between Democrats and Republicans on domestic policy, which have grown smaller in recent years, will dwindle to zero during the next session of Congress. That is the inevitable conclusion from President Truman’s post-election promise of co-operation with the Republican majority. As Truman himself declared, there has been complete agreement between the two capitalist parties on foreign policy.

Truman now offers to extend this bipartisan policy into domestic affairs. “I shall co-operate in every proper manner with members of the Congress,” says the Democratic chief, “and my hope and prayer is that this spirit of co-operation will be reciprocated.”

His administration intends to steer an even more conservative course. This means intensified reaction all along the line, directed first and foremost against organized labor.

Kellogg's workers strike for 'Equal pay for equal work!'

BY AMY HUSK

BATTLE CREEK, Mich. — The Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union negotiating committee voted down a Nov. 4 “last, best and final” set of contract demands from Kellogg’s bosses. Since Oct. 5, 1,400 union members have been on strike at four plants — in Omaha, Nebraska; Memphis, Tennessee; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and here.

The bosses’ offer “does not achieve what our members are asking for; a predictable pathway to fully vested, fully benefitted employment for all employees with no concessions,” the union said.

Many signs you see on the picket line say, “Equal pay for equal work.”

“The company won’t budge on the question of transitional employees and that’s our main issue,” Lisa Gregory, an international representative for BCTGM, told the *Militant*. The 2015 contract allowed Kellogg’s to keep 30% of the workforce in “transitional” status, a second tier making as much as \$12 an hour less than “legacy” employees. They get no pension and pay much higher medical premiums and deductibles.

“The company is supposed to ‘transition’ them into legacy status when someone retires or leaves, and they’re not doing it,” she said. “Now they want to get rid of the 30% cap on the number of transitional employees in a plant. We want to get rid of the two tier altogether.”

Robert Clark, a maintenance worker with 15 years on the job, said that despite what the bosses say, their latest offer was just “part of negotiations. There’s no legal standing to it. It means we have to stay out a bit longer.” There are some 320 union members at the plant here.

Clark said the company is trying to “keep up the illusion” that they are producing with replacement workers. But, he pointed out, the strikers could tell they aren’t because they can’t hear blowers that go on when raw materials are being moved to production. The com-

pany puts out misleading information about hours and pay claiming “we make \$120,000 a year,” he said. “We have to work every day to make that much.”

Many workers *are* working every day, John NeSmith said. “We work seven and sometimes eight days a week, because they add another shift on. This year I had a stretch where I worked 152 days in a row without a day off.”

Ricky Miller, who was picketing by the railroad tracks, said that since the strike began only one train has entered the plant. He started as a “casual” worker 15 years ago, and it took him seven years to become a permanent employee and make top wages and benefits. “At least you had a way to get there,” he said. “We’re fighting for the future workers.”

Support coming in

The mood on the picket line and in the union hall was upbeat and optimistic. The strikers have been getting a lot of support. While we were there workers dropped off a truckload of firewood, brought pizzas, and a retired Kellogg’s worker and his wife drove out from Niles, Michigan, to pick up signs to put in their yard. We met Bill Dearing, a retired carpenter who regularly pickets, and four BCTGM Local 1 officials, who drove from Chicago to show support.

On Nov. 4 Kellogg’s bosses released



Lisa Gregory, BCTGM International Representative

Since Oct. 5, 1,400 bakery workers have been on strike at Kellogg’s cereal plants. Chicago BCTGM Local 1 members and other supporters join picket in Battle Creek, Mich., Nov. 4.

their third-quarter report with profits up by almost 20% from the same quarter last year. “Kellogg’s continues to threaten to put profit over people and BCTGM Local 3G members will not stand for it,” responded Trevor Bidelman, the local’s president. “Our members are the ones who put their lives on the line through the pandemic to ensure that Kellogg’s products made it to grocery stores across the country and our strike will continue until we reach a fair contract.”

A GoFundMe page has been set up by Theodore Hunt, president of Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union Local 374, which organizes the Post cereal factory down the road. As of Nov. 7, over \$68,000 has been raised

for BCTGM Local 3G. A church group brings hot dinner to the union hall twice a week. The hall is filled with pantry contributions. An email sent out by the Michigan AFL-CIO asks for donations of household goods and other supplies.

Donations can be made out to “BCTGM Local 3G CES Fund” and sent to the hall at 1006 N. Raymond Road, Battle Creek, MI 49014.

The Michigan AFL-CIO organized a rally in front of Kellogg’s world headquarters in Battle Creek Oct. 27. Supporters came from the United Auto Workers, the Building and Construction Trades Council and other unions. There are plans in the works to organize another solidarity action here.

Deere strikers: End divisive two-tiers, raise wages

Continued from front page

freshments to the picket lines that were much appreciated by strikers.

Drape told us he thought they should have accepted the new agreement. Local 838 members voted the contract down by 71%. He said close to one-third of the 3,200 Deere employees there had been working for less than five years and that they wanted higher hourly wages than had been offered.

Drape said he appreciated the *Mili-*

tant’s coverage of the strike, and put the issue with an article from Waterloo on the Local 838 Facebook page for union members to read.

While talking with strikers on the picket lines here, most said they had voted against the proposed deal, despite the enhancements offered by the company. Everyone knows Deere has been raking in profits. Deere executives project the company will take in \$5.7-\$5.9 billion this year — at least 62% more than in 2013, the previous high.

Striker Todd Salisbury said he owns around 40 acres in southern Iowa but needs this job to meet expenses. “There used to be family farms here but that is now largely a thing of the past,” he said. “Farmers are forced to sell their land and give up farming or pay rent to new owners on land that used to be theirs.”

Salisbury voted against the contract because he wants to see more money upfront, not dragged out over a six-year period, the length of the contract Deere proposed. He said he was also opposed to the lump-sum payments the company offered in three of the years instead of pay raises. “We get taxed on the lump sum and then at the end of the year you get taxed again on the income. I want to see that money put into wages.”

Back at the union hall we met with two strikers who were helping to prepare meals. Kortney Clark has worked seven months as a forklift driver in the warehouse. She said she voted no on the contract. “With all the money the company is making, a 20% raise is more realistic than the 10% they offered,” she said.

“We lost our cost-of-living adjustment in the last contract,” she added. “The 10% increase does not make up for

the money we lost in the past six years without that COLA.” And, like all workers, they face steep inflation today, especially in things like food and gas.

Millisa Thurmond, who has worked in tractor assembly for six months, also voted against the contract. She said the way the bosses mess up their schedules is a real problem. “They tell you on Wednesday that you have to work on Saturday, and then turn around on Friday and say that there is no weekend work. You can’t plan anything that way,” she said. “And I agree that we need to get back that money that we lost when we didn’t have the COLA.”

In an effort to put more pressure on the strikers after the vote, Deere told the media that this was their “best, last, and final offer,” and planned no further negotiations. They threatened to ramp up production without the union workers.

Steve Frisque, president of UAW Local 722 at the GM parts distribution center in Hudson, Wisconsin, drove to Waterloo with Financial Secretary Jennifer Grabczyk to bring solidarity. He made available to the *Militant* a copy of the letter brought to the strikers:

“We want all of the membership of Local 838 and all the UAW members on strike against John Deere to know that your Brothers and Sisters from Local 722 in Hudson, Wi., are proud of all of you and will have your backs every step of the way! In solidarity!”

Getting the word out and building support and solidarity is critical in this fight! You can contact Local 838 at 2615 Washington St., Waterloo, IA 50702, Tel.: (319) 233-3049.

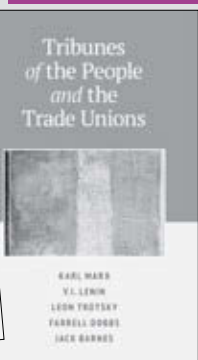
Gabby Prosser contributed to this article.

BOOKS WORKERS NEED TODAY...

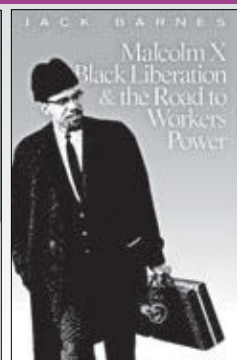
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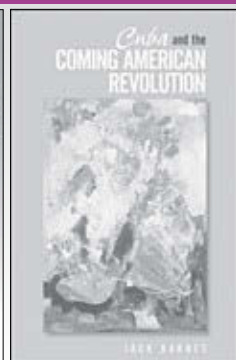
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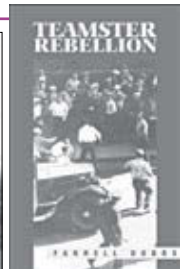
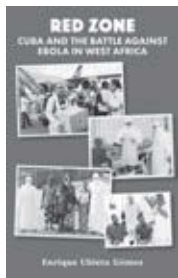
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UN summit fakery shows workers must defend land and labor

BY SETH GALINSKY

Like previous climate conferences, this year's United Nations summit in Glasgow, Scotland, has been marked by panicked claims that "time is running out" and empty promises by heads of state to reduce greenhouse gases.

The end result? More hot air and little agreement to do anything about contamination of the environment.

Heads of state from 130 countries — but not Russia, China or Brazil — and nearly 40,000 other government and U.N. officials, reporters, members of nongovernmental organizations, and business lobbyists attended the Conference of Parties Climate Change summit 2021, which ends Nov. 12.

"We only have a brief window left" to avoid "catastrophe," President Joseph Biden told the summit.

"Earth's climate has changed throughout history," notes NASA, which had a delegation at the conference. "Just in the last 650,000 years there have been seven cycles of glacial advance and retreat, with the abrupt end of the last ice age about 11,700 years ago marking the beginning of the modern climate era — and of human civilization." But the U.S. space agency then joins in the panic, claiming the current warming rate "is unprecedented."

How fast the climate is changing, the extent and impact of these changes, and how much is caused by human activity and how much by nature are matters conference organizers never intended to address. Their alarmist predictions and anti-working-class bent covered up the real cause of today's environmental problems — the dog-eat-dog capitalist system that puts profits before all else.

The conference president, Alok Sharma, said the goal was to keep global warming under 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) — beyond which doomsday looms.

Some prophets of catastrophe say millions will die from climate change. But a recent study in *Lancet*, an online medical journal, found that while 116,000 more people died of heat-related causes they attribute to climate change each year, at the same time some 283,000 fewer people died from cold.

A lot of hot air

While there are real problems, a result of the workings of capitalist production and exploitation, little serious was accomplished. Over 100 governments pledged to reduce methane emissions by a collective total of 30% from 2020 levels by the end of the decade, but acting on the promise is not binding.

More than 40 governments signed a pledge to quit coal in the 2030s or 2040s "or as soon as possible thereafter." The Chinese, Indian and Australian governments — major producers and consumers of coal — didn't sign. Nor did Washington, despite Biden's speech and his blaming Donald Trump for pulling the U.S. government out of previous pacts.

Biden has long talked about decreasing the use of coal and oil, without providing any alternative, condemning millions in semicolonial countries to remain without access to electricity. But on the eve of the summit, the U.S. president demanded the Russian and Saudi Arabian governments increase oil production to drive down prices, and help meet the needs of the U.S. bosses.



Farmers plant rice in West Java, Indonesia. President Joko Widodo told climate change conference that blanket ban on deforestation would affect lives of "millions of Indonesians."

More than 100 governments also signed a commitment to halt the destruction of the world's great forests. But like the other accords, it's toothless.

It too flies in the face of the needs of workers and peasants in the semicolonial world. Indonesian President Joko Widodo pointed out that a blanket ban on deforestation would affect "millions of Indonesians [who] depend for their livelihood on the forestry sector" as well as farmers who depend on clearing forests to grow crops.

Until working people have our own governments, the earth's natural patrimony will be endangered by the operation of the capitalist market system.

The London *Financial Times* reported Nov. 3 that the largest capitalist governments have pledged \$100 billion a year to help "poorer countries to cut

their emissions and adapt to climate change." The *Times* notes that "there is little agreement on how to spend the money, who should receive it or how to make sure it is used effectively."

Oxfam found 80% of the \$79.6 billion pledged in climate financing in 2019 was loans. In other words, payments to banks and bondholders that sink the semicolonial world deeper into debt.

Trade in the "carbon offset market" is booming. Large corporations buy "carbon credits" — investments in "green" industries that offset the carbon they release into the atmosphere — allowing them to claim they are "carbon neutral."

The *Times* admits that all of this can be subject to "loopholes in the carbon market rules, such as allowing countries to double count their emissions."

Former President Barack Obama told

Guantánamo trial exposes brutality of CIA torture

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In testimony before a sentencing jury of eight senior military officers Oct. 28, Majid Khan, who has been imprisoned by the U.S. government at its notorious military facility at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, for 15 years, read a written statement in court detailing his personal experiences being tortured by the CIA.

"I thought I was going to die," Khan said, describing the various torture techniques he was subjected to, including beatings, sexual assaults, being chained naked from a ceiling beam for long periods, starved, doused repeatedly with ice water to keep him awake for days, and being nearly drowned with his head held underwater.

Khan's statement "had a real impact," Katya Jestin, one of his lawyers, told the *Militant* by phone Nov. 5. "He's the first Guantánamo detainee to publicly describe torture at the hands of the CIA." He is also represented by the Center for Constitutional Rights and the Military Commissions Defense Organization.

Khan told the military court, "The more I cooperated, the more I was tortured," leading him to start lying in hopes of ending the abuse. In February 2012 he pleaded guilty to charges that included conspiracy, murder and providing material support to "terrorism" in delivering \$50,000 of al-Qaeda funds that was used to set up the 2003 bombing of a Marriott hotel in Jakarta, Indonesia, and planning other attacks.

Khan, 41, was born in Saudi Arabia and raised in Pakistan. He moved to the U.S. to join his family in Maryland at age 16. He graduated from high school in suburban Baltimore and was working for a telecommunications contractor that managed the Pentagon phone system at the time of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Shortly afterwards his mother died and he moved back to Pakistan.

After being arrested in Karachi in 2003, Khan was subjected to interrogation and torture at several CIA secret facilities over the next three years before being sent to Guantánamo.

He told the military commission, as well as the media present, that his intention was "to tell my story with the hope that you better understand who I was and who I have become. I want you to know what I did, what happened to me, and what I hope for the future." He added, "I'm not the young, impressionable, vulnerable kid I was 20 years ago. I reject al-Qaeda. I reject terrorism."

Military officials turned down the request by Khan's lawyers that his wife and daughter, who he has never seen, be present for the hearing.

In response to Khan's chilling testimony, seven of the eight military officers on the jury signed a letter urging clemency for Khan. This is quite an unusual move, noted Jestin, who said she never heard of something like this happening before.

"Mr. Khan was subjected to physical

participants that youth are frustrated with the failure of "older folks" to deal with the "cataclysmic problem."

His solution? The same thing he tells U.S. workers every election year. "Vote the issue."

"Don't think you can ignore politics," he said. "You can't be too pure for it. It's part of the process that is going to deliver all of us."

Vote for the bosses' parties? Rely on them rather than organizing among fellow working people to fight to take control of production out of their hands.

A working-class view

Thousands of young people protested in Glasgow, making more prophesies of doom and demanding "immediate and drastic" cuts to emissions. The summit was a "celebration of business as usual and blah, blah, blah," Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg told the crowd.

Absent from the conference — and the protest outside — was a working-class point of view and road forward.

"Workers must not fall into accepting the common view — that is, the bourgeois view — that the environment ... is a 'scientific' question, a 'natural question,' that somehow hovers, above classes and outside the class struggle," Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes, writes in *Capitalism's World Disorder*. "The workers movement has to explain the source of ecological destruction and why the answer lies along the revolutionary line of march of the working class."

"The workers movement must take the lead," he writes, "in actively exposing the destruction and dangers produced by capitalism and organizing opposition to them."

and psychological abuse," the letter said, "closer to torture performed by the most abusive regimes in modern history."

"Mr. Khan has been held without the basic due process under the U.S. Constitution," it noted. "He was held without charge or legal representation for nine years until 2012, and held without final sentencing until October 2021."

The author of the letter, Capt. Scott B. Curtis, the jury foreman, told the *New York Times* the CIA torture "was a stain on the moral fabric of America." "Slamming his head against the wall every time they moved him and beating him while he was hooded, I don't think those things are legal acts," he said.

The jury sentenced Kahn to 26 years in prison, to be counted from his guilty plea in 2012. But a plea-bargain agreement reached earlier this year — that the jury members weren't informed of — makes Khan eligible for release as early as February 2022, even if he is not granted clemency. To be released, however, another country must be found that will accept him. Otherwise he will be held indefinitely.

There are 39 prisoners still held at Guantánamo Bay, despite promises made by President Joseph Biden and by former President Barack Obama over a decade ago to close the prison. Some still await trial. Others have never been charged with anything. A third group is cleared for release, but U.S. authorities haven't agreed where they should go.

Socialist revolution in Russia set out to emancipate women

Women and the Family by Leon Trotsky is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for November. Trotsky describes how under the leadership of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party workers and peasants fought to defend their revolution and to transform themselves and social relations. This included charting a course to liberate women from endless toil at home to be able to take part in the cultural and political life of the nation. The excerpts are from Trotsky's 1925 article, "To Build Socialism Means to Emancipate Women and Protect Mothers." Copyright © 1970 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY LEON TROTSKY

The most accurate way of measuring our advance is by the practical measures which are being carried out for the improvement of the position of mother and child. This index is very reliable; it does not deceive. It immediately shows both the material successes and the cultural achievements in the broad sense. Historical experience shows that even the proletariat, already struggling with the oppressors, is far from prompt in concentrating the necessary attention on the oppressed position of woman as housewife, mother, and wife. Such is



Women at literacy class after triumph of 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. "Social construction," Leon Trotsky writes, must improve "the position of mother and child." Without child care, health care, culture reaching women, including in the countryside, "socialism is unthinkable."

the terrible force of being accustomed to the family slavery of woman! There is no point in even talking about the peasantry. The burden and hopelessness of the fate of the peasant woman, and not only from poor but even from middle families, can probably not be compared today even with the worst penal servitude. No rest, no holiday, no gleam of hope! Our revolution is only gradually reaching down to the familial foundations, mainly in the towns, for the moment, in the industrial regions, and only very slowly is it penetrating into the countryside. And the problems here are immeasurable.

To alter the position of woman *at the root* is possible only if all the conditions of social, family, and domestic existence are altered. The depth of the question of the mother is expressed in the fact that she is, in essence, a living point where all the decisive strands of economic and cultural work intersect. The question of motherhood is above all a question of an apartment, running water, a kitchen, a laundry room, a dining room. But it is just as much a question of a school, of books, of a place for recreation. Drunkenness beats down most mercilessly on the housewife and mother. Illiteracy and unemployment also. Running water and electricity in the apartment lighten the woman's burden above all. ...

Just as it was impossible to approach the construction of the Soviet state without freeing the peasantry from the tangles of serfdom, so it is impossible to

move to socialism without freeing the peasant woman and the woman worker from the bondage of family and household. And if we used to determine the maturity of a revolutionary worker not only by his attitude to the capitalist but also by his attitude to the peasant, i.e., by his understanding of the necessity of freeing the peasant from bondage — so now we can and must measure the socialist maturity of the worker and the progressive peasant by their attitude to woman and child, by their understanding of the necessity of freeing from bondage the mother in penal servitude, of giving her the possibility of straightening her back and involving herself as she should in social and cultural life.

Motherhood is the hub of all problems. That is why each new measure, each law, each practical step in economic and social construction must also be checked against the question of how it will affect the family, whether it worsens or lightens the fate of the mother, whether it improves the position of the child.

The great number of homeless children in our towns bears most terrible witness to the fact that we are still caught up on all sides in the tangles of the old society, which manifests itself in the most vicious way in the epoch of its downfall. The position of mother and child was never so difficult as in the years of the transition from the old to the new, especially in the years of the civil war. ... [T]he homelessness of the child

is above all the fruit of maternal homelessness. Consideration for the mother is the truest and deepest way to the improvement of the fate of the child.

The general growth of the economy is creating the conditions for a gradual reconstruction of family and domestic life. All questions connected with this must be posed in their full magnitude. We are approaching from various directions the renewal of the basic capital of the country; we are acquiring new machines to replace the old ones; we are building new factories; we are renewing our railways; the peasant is acquiring plows, seeders, tractors.

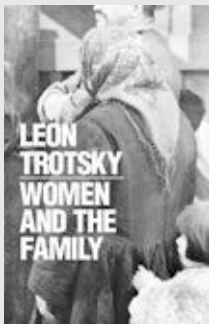
But the most basic "capital" is the people, i.e., its strength, its health, its cultural level. This capital requires renewal even more than the equipment of the factories or the peasant implements. It must not be thought that the ages of slavery, hunger, and bondage, the years of war and epidemics, have passed without a trace. No, they have left behind in the living organism of the people both wounds and scars. Tuberculosis, syphilis, neurasthenia, alcoholism — all these diseases and many others are spread widely among the masses of the population. The nation must be made healthy. Without that, socialism is unthinkable.

We must reach the roots, the sources. And where is the source of the nation if not in the mother? The struggle against the neglect of mothers must be given first place! Housing construction, the construction of child-care facilities, kindergartens, communal dining rooms and laundries must be put in the center of attention, and that attention must be vigilant and well organized. Here questions of *quality* decide all. Child-care, eating and laundry facilities must be set up so that by the advantages they provide they can deal a deathblow to the old closed-in, isolated family unit, completely supported on the bent shoulders of the housewife and mother. ... Caring for children in public facilities, as well as feeding of adults in communal canteens, is cheaper than in the family. But the transfer of material means from the family to the child-care centers and canteens will take place only if the social organization learns to satisfy the most primary demands better than the family. ... Vigilant social control and constant urging on all the organs and institutions which serve the family and domestic needs of the toiling masses is essential.

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We need our own party, a labor party

Statement by John Studer, Socialist Workers Party national campaign director, Nov. 10.

The only party that told the truth in the 2021 elections about how working people can fight back against mounting attacks we face today was the Socialist Workers Party.

Our candidates explained the root cause of the crisis — the capitalist rulers, who put their profits above all the needs of land and labor — and how workers can chart a course to take political power into our own hands. They set an example by joining union struggles and building solidarity that is crucial to the outcome and to strengthen the entire labor movement.

Because of the crisis of their system and sharpening competition worldwide, the rulers are driven to carry out assaults on our jobs, wages and working conditions. They know they will meet growing resistance. That is why they attack our political rights and why they use their cops and courts to ban picketing by United Mine Workers strikers at Warrior Met. They use their state power in a myriad of ways to wrap us and our unions up in red tape and regulations aimed at blunting our fighting power.

Underlying every political question are class divisions. On one side stand the bosses and their legions of middle-class enablers, who depend on squeezing working people harder to defend their profits. On the other side are workers and farmers fighting to wrest from their hands a greater share of the wealth that our labor alone produces.

Working people and our unions lose when we

look to the rulers’ two political parties, the Democrats and Republicans. Both claim to act for “all Americans,” but loyally serve the wealthy rulers. When they want you to vote for the fox, Malcolm X explained, they show you the wolf.

Workers can only address all political questions together from the standpoint of *our* class interests, just as the bosses do to defend *theirs*.

For that we need our own party, a labor party, based on our unions and the struggles they lead. It would show in word and deed that workers have common interests in combating all exploitation and oppression. It would lead fights to win protection from joblessness and inflation, and organize opposition to Washington’s wars and interventions around the world. It would champion the fights of all those oppressed and exploited by capital.

Most importantly, it would act on the capacities of workers and farmers themselves to mount the uncompromising struggle necessary to overturn capitalist rule, as working people did in Cuba in 1959.

With a communist leadership they took power, established a workers and farmers government, took the factories, land and banks from the capitalist exploiters and reorganized production under workers control to meet human need. The courage, discipline, class consciousness and internationalism they acquired shows what working people can become. That has made possible their decadeslong resistance to the U.S. rulers’ economic war against their socialist revolution.

Their example is one working people in the U.S. can emulate.

Women in Benin win right to choose abortion

BY JANET POST

After lengthy debate, Benin’s parliament voted Oct. 20 to decriminalize abortion during the first trimester of pregnancy. If ratified by the constitutional court, Benin will become the first country in West Africa to legalize a woman’s right to choose to have an abortion.

Women’s rights organizations have led a long fight to gain this victory. “I am very, very happy that from now on, we can give this right back to the woman, to decide for herself,” Angela Kpeidja, president of women’s rights group Do Not Be Afraid, told Africanews.

“We have to let women choose,” said pro-choice activist Faustine Adjagba. “And we have to protect women from all these charlatans and fake abortion providers that flourish in our towns.”

Benin Health Minister Benjamin Hounkpatin estimated that unsafe abortions have been responsible for 20% of maternal deaths in the country.

The World Health Organization estimates that only about 12% of people in Benin have access to, or use, modern contraception methods.

Until now abortion in Benin was permitted only if the pregnancy endangered the life of the woman, was a result of rape or incest or if the fetus had a severe medical condition. Under the new law abortion is legal if the pregnancy is likely to “aggravate or cause material, educational, professional or moral distress incompatible with the woman or the unborn child’s interest.”

Tiwa Tope, a 21-year-old women’s rights activist, told Al Jazeera that now “all a woman has to do is to meet a social worker who will refer them to an authorized hospital. Or walk into a private or government-owned hospital and meet a doctor in charge.” Only four other African countries have abortion laws allowing a woman to choose to have the procedure — Cape Verde, South Africa, Tunisia and Zambia.

All but one Black juror knocked out of Arbery trial

Continued from front page

The jury selection is “just another injustice that we face,” Thea Brooks, Arbery’s aunt, told MSNBC. She had hoped that at least one juror would be a Black woman, someone who “looks like me.” Nonetheless, Brooks expressed confidence that when the evidence is shown guilty verdicts will be returned. Brooks has led protests since last year demanding the arrest and prosecution of Arbery’s attackers.

Judge Timothy Walmsley denied a prosecution motion challenging the defense striking virtually all potential jurors who are Black from the jury. The prosecution says this was racially motivated. But the judge ruled the defense gave “legitimate, nondiscriminatory, clear and reasonably specific” reasons. At the same time, he admitted, “intentional discrimination” appeared to have shaped jury selection, but said Georgia law limited his ability to intervene.

Gregory McMichael is a retired cop and former investigator in the local prosecutor’s office. For two months after the shooting cops and local prosecutors did everything possible to avoid arresting him and his son. As protests took place, two prosecutors opted out of the case. Finally the third charged all three assailants with malice and felony murder. They also face federal hate crime and attempted kidnapping charges.

They have pleaded not guilty to both sets of charges.

A University of California at Berkeley study in 2020 shows how easily prosecutors get around a U.S. Supreme Court decision barring the exclusion of jurors on the basis of race. It found that in appellate court cases in California from 2006 to 2018 potential jurors who are Black were excluded in about 72% of cases. Prosecutors removed potential jurors who are Caucasian only 0.4% of the time. “Valid” reasons given for excluding Black jurors included they had “visited family members who were incarcerated,” and “had negative experiences with law enforcement.”

Footage from police body cams show Arbery’s assailants were treated as “part of ours” by cops who arrived on the scene. They casually banter with the McMichaels. No attempt is made to render aid to Arbery.

Gregory McMichael is shown telling cops that Arbery was attempting to take the shotgun from his son and that Travis McMichael had no choice but to fire at him. “To tell you the truth if I had a chance I’d of shot him myself.”

The defense claims Arbery’s attackers acted in self-defense as they tried to detain him under the state’s citizen’s arrest law. They say he may have been involved in a burglary. The defendants will be tried under the Civil War-era vigilante law despite its recent repeal.

NYC taxi drivers fight

Continued from front page

Workers Alliance and Marblegate Asset Management, the largest holder of taxi driver’s loans, to begin to address the crushing debts faced by many medallion owner-drivers.

Under the agreement, the city pays \$30,000 to Marblegate on each of its outstanding loans. The lender in turn reduces the amount each cab-medallion owner owes to \$170,000, payable at 5% interest over 20 years. Debt-service payments covered by the agreement are to be capped at \$1,122 per month. The city agrees to guarantee the loans, meaning it will pay off the debt if any cabbie defaults.

The yellow-cab drivers on hunger strike in front of City Hall broke it off when they received the news.

“I knew one of the nine drivers who died by suicide,” Augustine Tang, 37, one of those on the fast, told the *Militant*. “After years of the burden and pressures of uncertainty, losing homes, credit being shot, not having a decent life at retirement, it feels incredible that we won this.”

A medallion is the license sold by the city — and fixed on the hood of every yellow cab — that authorizes drivers to pick up passengers on the street. Marblegate owns what had been highly profitable loans on roughly 4,000 of the city’s 13,500 medallions.

“Medallion owners,” the ones covered by this agreement, “are only 2% of the driving workforce,” said Tang. Indeed, there are a wide variety of for-hire drives here, from those who work for apps like Uber, to livery and black car services, to those workers who pay rent to medallion owners to drive on shifts, to green-cab drivers limited to uptown Manhattan and outer boroughs, and more. Some drivers work in two or three categories. Hours of service, car ownership and pay rates all vary widely.

The price of an average medallion began soaring in 2002, going from \$200,000 to more than \$1 million in 2014. The city raked in money by promoting them as an investment “better than the stock market” and selling them as prices rose, as well as collecting taxes on the sales. To buy, most purchasers took out sizable loans from credit unions and banks. In late 2014 the bubble burst and the price plummeted below \$200,000. Marblegate then began buying up the loans.

Other lenders, who together carry about 60% of the outstanding loans, have yet to say whether they will accept the deal.

“We hope other lenders will join in,” Erhan Tunçel, another of the hunger strikers, said.

In March the city had set up a \$65 million fund taken from federal COVID relief money where drivers could apply for up to \$29,000 to restructure their loans. The plan combined \$20,000 as a new, interest-free loan from the city, with \$9,000 to use for monthly loan payments. Victor Salazar, a driver who lost his medallion, called the March fund “a band-aid for a bullet wound.”

It isn’t clear whether drivers who took the March offer will be eligible for the new program.

Eric Oppong drives a cab, but leases it from the medallion owner. He recalled seeing protests by medallion owners decrying predatory pricing and lending practices “a couple years ago, and I said to myself, ‘I am with them. I’m not one of them, but I can put myself in their shoes.’ I hope they got some relief.”

There are 159,000 drivers currently licensed by the city’s Taxi and Limousine Commission, though many stopped driving during government pandemic lockdowns and plummeting tourism. Many are not yet back on the streets working.

Despite the different circumstances facing the wide variety of for-hire drivers, they share one thing in common: they work for wages to pay off their lease and their loans — for the day, week, month lease, or vehicle and medallion loans — and only then see what they have left for income. All must pay fees and tickets, get licensed by the city, buy gas, maintain their vehicles, and compete for fares in an industry that is adding drivers by the day as business begins to rebound.

Correction

The photo caption on the Kaiser workers’ protest in issue no. 42 should have identified Jenny Wong Swanson as a shop steward in the United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals.